

# MINISTRY - AT - LARGE

IN LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS



## Sixty - Second Report



FROM JANUARY, 1907, TO DECEMBER, 1907

INCLUSIVE

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INCORPORATED JULY 21, 1879

The Purpose for which the Corporation is Instituted is Educational,  
Charitable, Benevolent and Religious.—*Extract from Charter*



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OFFICES:

FREE CHAPEL, 150 MIDDLESEX STREET

Between Elliot and South Streets

OPEN ALL DAY

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

*President*

CHARLES C. HUTCHINSON

*Vice-Presidents*

MRS. CHARLES D. PALMER  
HAMILTON BURRAGE

HENRY L. TIBBETTS  
FREEMAN B. SHEDD

*Secretary*

JOSIAH BUTLER  
GEORGE C. WRIGHT, pro tem

*Treasurer*

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*Managers*

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THOMAS NESMITH  
MISS N. P. H. ROBBINS  
FRANK K. STEARNS  
MRS. JULIAN TALBOT

*Minister-at-Large*

GEORGE C. WRIGHT

Mogan

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**T**HIS 62d annual report of the Ministry-at-Large in Lowell tells of its work in the past year, how it has been done, and why it is necessary. The report aims to convince friends of the institution that it has been worth while for them to help in its work, and, also, it aims to make new friends and supporters of the work done here. The report must be brief and clear to have it read at all by people already occupied with their own affairs and other public interests. It appeals to intelligent, philanthropic and public spirited men and women, who have social conscience and humane interest.

The Ministry-at-Large is chartered for education, charity, benevolence and religion. For friendly aid to small wage earners. There are many such among the mill operatives and other minor occupations. They turn to the Ministry-at-Large when misfortunes befall them, as to their friend and ally. We have frank and sympathetic relations with them are reticent of their confidences and affairs, give them careful and courteous consideration, and guard their children from the future humiliation of a questionable and advertised parental record. We upbuild families to self-reliance, self-restraint, and moral and social betterment. We do anything and everything that may be necessary for them without regard to nationality, color or religion. Our purpose is preventive. We direct paupers and vagrants to the municipal authorities, giving ourself to the keeping of self-respecting small wage workers from falling into pauperism and vagrancy. "The poor ye have always with you," said by One who knew mankind means that some men in every generation are short of opportunity, education, will. They and their families are on the mercy and sympathy of others stronger and better conditioned than they are.

Owing to the temporary financial stingency which began in October, it is quite clear that institutions like this one are facing a difficult and trying season. Small-wage people are falling idle and their applications for relief increasing. The Ministry-at-Large cares for these unfortunates and to do it needs large contributions.

During the year the Ministry-at-Large has given 3380 consultations as follows:

Consultations in office .....	1711
"    by telephone .....	840
"    at homes .....	829
	<hr/>
	3380
Applications for relief .....	1868
"    "    advice .....	1293
"    "    work .....	219
	<hr/>
	3380

Of these applications for advice 403 were made by other institutions, churches and schools.

Of these applications for relief 509 were referred to the Overseers of the Poor.

The other applications for relief were met as follows:

Grocery orders .....	434
Fuel orders .....	265
Shoe orders .....	333
Meat orders .....	133
Milk orders .....	54
Clothing orders .....	106
Medicine orders .....	35
Rent orders .....	3
Board orders .....	2
Meal orders .....	710
Lodging orders .....	36
Money orders .....	2
R. R. fares .....	27
Legal assistance .....	7
Doctor's attendance .....	29
Hospital treatment .....	28
Inquiry letters .....	127
Electric car rides .....	400
Clothing (2d), pieces .....	159
Shoes (2d), pairs .....	12
Fruit given .....	154
Thanksgiving dinners given .....	7
Christmas dinners and boxes given .....	10

Several specific illustrations from our ordinary day's work will give you a glimpse of its range and variety:

A., operative, Judean, aged 19, husband in jail, 2 children and in delicate condition. Father and mother in Jerusalem. Discouraged and homesick.

B., operative, Egyptian, aged 18, wife in Egypt. Homesick and desperate.

C., operative, Irish American, wife and 3 young children, now in consumption. Wife sick and youngest child (18 mos. old) feeble minded, fretful, and must be carried in arms.

D., operative, English, aged 20, father and mother in England, betrayed and deserted, seeking care and refuge for herself and child.

E., operative, Portuguese, widow, consumptive, 4 children, one daughter wayward.

F., operative, Irish American, intemperate, criminal tendency, imprisonment pending, wife and 4 children.

G., operative, Scotch, boy of good character, arrested for unwittingly obstructing sidewalk, asking us to protect him from Reform School sentence.

H., operative, Scotch, wife and 2 children, scrofulous consumptive and unable to work, wife affected, one child almost blind, in need of special medical treatment, child placed in hospital, and other aid.

I., operative, American, consumptive, wife and 10 children.

J., operative, English, wife an invalid, 3 young children, wife sent to hospital, infant child boarded out while she is there, and other aid.

K., aged American gentlewoman, paralytic, son unable to work.

L., operative, French Canadian, husband an invalid, 4 young children.

The Country Week Committee were given the use of the offices during July and August for sending out of needy mothers and children for country vacations.

The Boston and Northern Street Railway Co. gave 500 tickets for free rides during July and August.

The yard and building were open for noon-hour rest for the mill operatives of the neighborhood.

Miss Mary Nesmith makes a contribution annually for the maternity needs of destitute women.

The Day Nursery has assisted in caring for young children in our charge.

The Lowell General Hospital has rendered service in the care of sick and surgical patients in our charge.

The D. L. Page Co. furnishes ice cream free, on our recommendation, to needy sick people.

Several well-known lawyers have given gratuitously their legal aid to destitute clients recommended by the Ministry-at-Large.

The health primers of the Health Education League have been freely distributed from our office to persons likely to receive benefit through reading them.

Nurse and Mother's Helper assists the indigent mother in times of sickness. She gets the children ready for school, tidies the house, cooks an occasional meal, besides bathing and caring for the sick one. After experimenting for a year, at considerable expense, with a trained nurse and her assistant, it was found their services were too exclusively called for by the doctors to care for their chronic patients, and that the Ministry-at-Large, during the year of their employment had too little benefit of their services. We have now at call a woman who is nurse and mother's helper in one, and find that she better meets the needs of the poorer people whom the Ministry-at-Large serves.

The High Street Church, at our solicitation, equipped with clothing (52 pieces) a blind child for whom we gained her admis-

sion into the Perkins Institution for the Blind. It also paid the board of an infant child while its mother was in hospital.

The First Baptist Church, on our recommendation, assumed the entire care of a large family in desperate condition.

The other churches of the city ask our advice and assistance in aiding needy families within their charge.

The churches of Tyngsboro, Billerica and Chelmsford have aided with clothing, as have many Lowell contributors.

The following persons, according to nationalities, have benefitted by this aid:

Americans .....	792
English .....	401
Scotch .....	494
Irish .....	629
British Canadians .....	121
French     " .....	262
Portuguese .....	22
Swedes .....	20
Danes .....	8
Greeks .....	65
Syrians .....	2
Russians .....	41
Poles .....	8
Egyptians .....	2
Mill operatives (applications from) .....	1381

Some of the causes of destitution and dependency appear at a glance to a casual observer: (1) Large families on small incomes, with few children of wage-earning age; (2) death of principal wage earner; and (3) irregularity of work due to incapacity, drink or industrial conditions; (4) immorality. Other causes of it are more obscure and not so apparent: (1) Marriage of the unfit; (2) loose sex relationship; (3) parental ignorance; (4) defective children who are not known to be defective; (5) bad sanitary conditions; (6) the exhausting overwork of women who are to be mothers; (7) the pace set in all branches of labor

that is reducing the vitality of men and women and making old men and women of the middle aged; (8) the crowding together of people into a congested life where all that is moral and finest tends to disappear; (9) the presence of the undesirable immigrant as a temporary resident and labor competitor,—as the alien disturber of economic, industrial and social conditions, of Anglo-Saxon standards of healthy living for human beings.

This undesirable immigration is a perplexing problem to the national government, to some European governments, and to some manufacturing centres like Lowell. How to deal with it puzzles philanthropic, civic and social experts. These people are alien to Anglo-Saxon standards and customs. To give this immigrant relief as you give to an English or American family is to inflame craft and avarice. To give him less provokes criticism. What then? Hear of him and his doings as portrayed by Charles E. Speare in the *North American Review*:

Since the monetary stringency began in October there has been a great exodus of European immigrants from this country back to their old homes. The number of returning immigrants has been estimated at 100,000. Of course, they have taken hundreds of thousands of dollars with them and this fact has caused some lamentation over the consequent depletion of our monetary stock at a time when we could ill afford to lose any of it. Those who make this point overlook, however, another fact, namely, that had those immigrants stayed here they would have sent out of the country in regular home remittances vastly more money than they carried with them on the homeward journey. Regarded from the point of view of the effects on the supply of money in this country the recent exodus is a matter for congratulation. It diminishes the steady drain of money through immigrant remittances to Europe.

Out of the savings of the foreign-born in America, \$250,000,000 a year is now going abroad. The annual increase is ten per cent. If this money were retained here, it would be sufficient every four years to liquidate our interest-bearing debt. The nationalities of southern and western Europe, from which the bulk of recent immigration has come, show the heaviest per capita remittances. Against the per capita remittance by Germans of \$4.05 and by English and Irish of \$7.14, races long ago established in the United States, we have the high per capita rate of \$30 by the Italian, \$50 by the Greek, \$28.10 by the Slavic people and \$14.50 by the Russian, all of whom are a relatively new element in our civilization.

The distribution of the \$250,000,000 among ten countries of Europe is estimated as follows: Italy, \$70,000,000; Austria-Hungary, \$65,000,000;

Great Britain, \$25,000,000; Norway and Sweden, \$25,000,000; Russia, \$25,000,000; Germany, \$15,000,000; Greece, \$5,000,000; all others, \$10,000,000.

The first consideration that occurs is that it goes far to offset the heavy balance of merchandise trade in favor of the United States. That balance has averaged in recent years about \$400,000,000. The indebtedness of Europe on this score is not paid in gold. It is simply offset by various items of indebtedness due from the United States to Europe. Chief among these must be reckoned the amount remitted annually by European immigrants.

This heavy drain of money counterbalances in large part the alleged economic gain to this country through immigration. Many of the immigrants who make the largest savings and remittances are mere transients, remaining here only long enough to accumulate a sum sufficient to establish themselves independently at home. In proportion as they save money and send it out of the country they contribute nothing to the national prosperity as consumers and investors. Their exported savings represent a reduction of the demand for commodities and services and a curtailment of the growth of capital. The self-sweating process by which they make their large savings—working often beyond their strength and living like animals—is extremely bad for the immigrants themselves.

An Italian working with a railroad construction gang and living sometimes in a shanty and sometimes in a bunk car every three months remits to Naples \$90 of the total of \$125 earned. He is buying land. An Hungarian sends back in the proportion of \$15 to every \$40 of income per month. This is undoubtedly a fair average, but there are thousands of individual cases where the percentage is much higher. The Slovaks and the other like peoples are saving every last penny, and living in circumstances that seem almost animal, in order to accumulate as soon as possible what to them would be a competency and permanent financial independence in their home town. Complaint has been made by foreign Government authorities that the stress of this sort of existence very quickly undermines the health of the immigrant, and that, laden with gold, but broken in body, he comes home to die of consumption or some other disease which poor nourishment, exposure and unceasing toil finally fasten on the sturdiest of physiques.

The financial gain to Europe through this system of immigrant savings and remittances is by no means an unqualified benefit. Besides the loss through depopulation, there are serious economic disturbances through the influx of foreign money and the discontent of the working class produced by American emigration.

The inflow of foreign money into impoverished sections increases prices in every direction. This is prominently illustrated in the advance in land, for which immigrants, who never before had possessed a surplus,

pay two or three times the real value. As is well known, large numbers of Italian, Hungarian and Scandinavian immigrants go home each winter. Professor Pasquale Villari, a noted Italian economist, has recently pointed out that the savings which the immigrants from America bring back with them, and on which they live during the period of enforced rest, go chiefly to the taverns, and that the fruit of this ready money is increased drunkenness, epidemics of venereal diseases and a rising percentage of crime and insanity. Greece is already beginning to feel similar economic and social changes, in spite of the fact that emigration from that country did not start in any volume until after 1900, and that the Grecian population of the United States is still less than 100,000. The peasants either go away to America or to the Transvaal, or else sit about in the cafés of Athens and the Piraeus and refuse to work. Labor, rents and all the necessities of life have advanced amazingly."

This phase of the immigrant problem is likely to be overlooked. It is made a part of this report as a matter of record and for future reference, and because these immigrants in large numbers have come to Lowell to work in the mills, and they are slowly but surely changing the social, political and moral character of this city. This immigrant arrives here with the language and inbred habits, customs and traditions of his nation. The problem before him is to adopt himself to the language, habits and customs of a strange country and stranger people. Public schools and his children through public school instruction help him; his minister or priest through friendly aid and good counsel help him; and a Free Labor Bureau, under State or National supervision, will help him. The Free Labor Bureau is the first help that should offer itself to him. It guards his labor and his health, protects him from enemies and half-friends, gives him a fair deal, and a chance to become Americanized in the true way.

The Sunday Services for adults and children are well attended. Moral principles and religious sanctions are set forth clearly and simply, as they make for clean, righteous, courageous and cheerful living, in sound body, intelligent mind, skillful hands and social sense. We are the feeder of all the churches of the city. And in turn they are friendly and helpful to us.

According to the deed of trust: "The Free Chapel is to be devoted to religious, charitable and educational purposes. The privileges of the Chapel are not to be limited to persons of any

particular nation or religious sect; the Chapel is not to be used to promulgate the peculiar views or increase the members of any religious sect or party; it shall not be designated by any sectarian name; the seats of the Chapel shall be free."

This undenominational provision of the deed of trust of our land and building (known as the Free Chapel) is interesting just now in connection with several incidents in recent American life which illustrate the growth of undenominational churches:

Lyman Abbott, at the John Harvard celebration in Harvard University in November, suggested the desirability of organizing in that University an undenominational church. He cited the fact that Harvard University had achieved what had before been regarded as the impossible in organizing an undenominational Theological Seminary.

Dr. Edwin P. Parker about the same time suggested to his people in Hartford, Connecticut, the desirability of converting their church, the Central Congregational, into an undenominational church, its members bound together not by a creed or a ritual but by a common purpose and spirit.

King's Chapel in Boston has recently put its property into the hands of a Board of Trustees, and the selection of the Trustees by the Wardens and Vestry is subjected to the approval of the Faculty of Harvard Divinity School, which is an undenominational faculty. The object of this arrangement is not only to preserve the property for religious uses but also to secure for the church an undenominational basis. And this undenominational character is further secured by a provision in the deed of trust against any sectarian discrimination in the church.

The Federation of Churches was initiated a year ago. Twenty-one evangelical denominations have already officially accepted the proposed basis of federated action. The Federation illustrates the growing dissatisfaction with present denominational differences and the growing desire among Protestants of all denominations to find a way to undenominational churches and unity of worship and service.

GEORGE C. WRIGHT,

Lowell, December 31, 1907.

Minister-at-Large.

## **FORM OF BEQUEST**

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I give, devise and bequeath unto the MINISTRY-AT-LARGE  
in Lowell, Massachusetts, the sum of ..... Dollars.



